

CLAIMS

1 1. A method of operating a printing system, wherein said printing system comprises
2 at least one printer and at least two user terminals connected to the at least one printer
3 through a network, each said printer having a control unit which receives print jobs from
4 the user terminals and controls processing of these print jobs, the method comprising:

5 sending, upon a disturbance of a predetermined kind in one of the at least one
6 printer while processing a print job, a warning message relating to said disturbance to at
7 least one of the user terminals;

8 providing, upon receipt of said warning message, a first alerting signal relating to
9 said disturbance at a predetermined first one of said user terminals;

10 waiting for a user response to be performed upon the printer; and

11 providing, if no user response is detected within a predetermined delay time, a
12 second alerting signal relating to the same disturbance at a predetermined other one of
13 the user terminals.

1 2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

2 sending, if no user response to said first alerting signal is detected within a
3 predetermined delay time, a second warning message relating to said same disturbance
4 to said other one of the user terminals for providing said second alerting signal.

1 3. The method according to claim 2, wherein upon reception of said first warning
2 message, said first user terminal provides said first alerting signal at least in the form of a
3 first acoustic or optical signal for alerting a corresponding user, and upon reception of
4 said second message, the other user terminal provides said second alerting signal at
5 least in the form of a second acoustic or optical signal for alerting a corresponding user.

1 4. The method according to claim 2, further comprising:

2 checking if said disturbance is being or has been looked after;
3 and if so, not providing said second alerting signal.

1 5. The method according to claim 4, wherein a response that causes the second
2 alerting signal to not be provided takes the form of a detection by the control unit of the
3 printer that a signal indicating the removal of the disturbance has been input.

1 6. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
2 checking, in a user terminal, if said first warning message relates to a disturbance of
3 a predetermined kind;
4 and, if so, in said first one of the user terminals, providing a first alerting signal for
5 alerting the user substantially upon receipt of said first warning message, and
6 in said other one of the user terminals, providing a second alerting signal for alerting
7 the user after a predetermined time interval.

1 7. The method according to claim 6, further comprising:
2 checking if said disturbance is being or has been looked after;
3 and if so, not providing said second alerting signal.

1 8. The method according to claim 7, wherein a response that causes the second
2 alerting signal to not be provided takes the form of a detection by the control unit of the
3 printer that a signal indicating the removal of the disturbance has been input.

1 9. The method according to claim 1, wherein said first one of the user terminals
2 submitted a print job in the course of which said disturbance occurred.

1 10. The method according to claim 1, wherein said other one of the user terminals
2 is a user terminal of a key operator.

1 11. The method according to claim 1, wherein said alerting signal comprises a
2 message on the display screen of the user terminal.

1 12. The method according to claim 1, wherein said predetermined
2 kind of disturbance comprises a disturbance that can be removed by an operator.

1 13. The method according to claim 1, wherein said predetermined
2 kind of disturbance comprises non-availability of recording sheets needed for processing
3 a print job.

1 14. The method according to claim 1, wherein said predetermined
2 kind of disturbance comprises non-availability of staples needed for processing a print
3 job.

1 15. The method according to claim 1, wherein said predetermined
2 kind of disturbance comprises a paper jam during processing of a print job.

1 16. The method according to claim 1, wherein said predetermined
2 kind of disturbance comprises a situation in which an output-receiving tray is full.

1 17. For connection to a network having at least two user terminals, a printer
2 comprising:
3 a printing unit; and
4 a control unit, connected to said network and said printing unit, which receives print
5 jobs from the user terminals and controls how the printing unit processes said print jobs,
6 wherein the control unit, upon a disturbance of a predetermined kind, sends a first
7 warning message relating to said disturbance to a predetermined first one of the user
8 terminals; and
9 wherein, if no user response is received within a predetermined delay time, the
10 control unit sends a second warning message relating to said same disturbance to a
11 predetermined other one of the user terminals.

1 18. The printing system according to claim 17, wherein said first warning message
2 is for causing a first acoustic or optical signal for alerting a user to be provided at said first
3 one of the user terminals and wherein said second warning message is for causing a
4 second acoustic or optical signal for alerting another user to be provided at said other one
5 of the user terminals.

1 19. The printer according to claim 17, wherein said first one of the user terminals is
2 a user terminal having submitted a print job in which said disturbance occurred.

1 20. The printer according to claim 17, wherein said other one of the user terminals
2 is a user terminal of a key operator.

1 21. The printer according to claim 17, wherein said signal for alerting the user
2 comprises a message on the display screen of the pertinent user terminal.

1 22. The printer according to claim 17, wherein said predetermined

2 disturbance comprises a disturbance that can be removed by an operator.

1 23. The printer according to claim 17, wherein said predetermined
2 disturbance comprises non-availability of recording sheets needed for processing a print
3 job.

1 24. The printer according to claim 17, wherein said predetermined
2 disturbance comprises non-availability of staples needed for processing a print job.

1 25. The printer according to claim 17, wherein said predetermined
2 disturbance comprises a paper jam during processing of a print job.

1 26. The printer according to claim 17, wherein said predetermined
2 disturbance comprises a situation in which an output-receiving tray is full.

1 27. The printer according to claim 17, wherein a user response that causes the
2 second warning signal to not be generated takes the form of a detection that a
3 confirmation signal for signalling the removal of the disturbance has been input at the
4 printer.

1 28. The printer according to claim 17, wherein a user response that causes the
2 second warning signal to not be generated takes the form of a detection that said
3 disturbance is being or has been looked after

1 29. For connection to a network having at least one printer, each printer having a
2 control unit which receives print jobs from user terminals on said network and controls the
3 processing of these print jobs by the printer, and wherein the control unit, upon a
4 disturbance of said processing of a print job, sends a warning message relating to said
5 disturbance onto said network, a printing system comprising:
6 a first remote user interface on said network; and
7 a second remote user interface on said network;
8 wherein each of said first and second remote user interfaces include:
9 means for checking if said warning message relates to a disturbance of a
10 predetermined kind; and
11 means for generating an acoustic or optical signal for alerting a user of one

12 of said remote user interfaces; and

13 wherein, upon reception of a warning message of said predetermined kind:

14 said first remote user interface generates a first signal relating to said
15 disturbance for alerting the corresponding user substantially upon receipt of and in
16 response to said warning message; and

17 said second remote user interface generates a second signal relating to
18 said same disturbance for alerting the user in response to and at a predetermined time
19 after receiving said warning message.

1 30. The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said second user interface
2 includes means for detecting a status of said printer and, upon detection that said
3 disturbance is being or has been looked after, does not generate said second signal for
4 alerting the user.

1 31. The printing system according to claim 30, wherein a response that causes the
2 second signal for alerting the user to not be generated takes the form of detection that a
3 confirmation signal for signalling the removal of the disturbance has been input at the
4 printer.

1 32. The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said first user interface is a
2 user interface having submitted a print job in which said disturbance occurred.

1 33. The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said other user interface is a
2 user interface of a key operator.

1 34. The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said signal for alerting the
2 user comprises a message on a display screen.

1 35. The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said predetermined
2 disturbance comprises a disturbance that can be removed by an operator.

1 36. The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said predetermined
2 disturbance comprises non-availability of recording sheets needed for processing a print
3 job.

1 39. The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said predetermined
2 disturbance comprises a situation in which an output-receiving tray is full.